Is government dysfunctional? Can change come through the legislative process? Brandeis University namesake Louis D. Brandeis suggested that the states can be “laboratories of democracy.” ENACT: The Educational Network for Active Civic Transformation, a new national program based at Brandeis, takes inspiration in part from that idea.

ENACT will be a major voice in addressing challenges to American democracy by engaging young people around the country in state-level legislative change based on a shared commitment to knowledge, cooperation, justice and integrity.

At the core of ENACT are courses taught at colleges and universities across the country, supported by a national in-person and online network connecting the faculty and staff in those courses with each other. Students learn through direct engagement in the work of advancing legislation: researching the issues being debated, meeting with community organizations, and traveling to the state capital to meet with legislators.

Participating schools represent a diverse range of higher education institutions. They are linked through an online network that enhances student learning, connects them with people active in the field, and provides an opportunity for ENACT faculty and students to inspire and instruct others who are committed to engaging in effective, ethical state-level legislative change.

The ENACT Model

- **Workshop:** Under the leadership of the program’s academic director, ENACT Fellows meet in person to share ideas and work on course development. In-person and virtual meetings continue on an ongoing basis.

- **Courses:** In ENACT courses students learn about the legislative process at the state level, with a substantial hands-on component in which they engage directly in that process.

- **Online Network:** The ENACT Network is a national in-person and online network of students, faculty, activists and legislators, with a focus on the first 16 ENACT states. It is a strategic and information hub for students, ENACT Faculty Fellows, and other state-level players that enables them to connect with counterparts throughout the country.

“The most important office, and the one which all of us can and should fill, is that of private citizen.” – Louis D. Brandeis
2016 highlights

- The first cohort of ENACT Faculty Fellows is selected from a pool of applicants from across the country. The 15 Fellows hail from colleges and universities in or near state capitals across the United States, including public and private institutions, religiously-affiliated institutions, and historically black colleges and universities. They range from relatively young professors innovating in the field to faculty members with decades of experience in academia, politics and advocacy.
- The Fellows participate in the first ENACT Institute, a five-day workshop at Brandeis featuring professionals from advocacy organizations, meetings with students from the Brandeis ENACT course, and a day at the Massachusetts State House, hosted by Massachusetts State Representative Jay Kaufman ’68, MA ’73, a longtime supporter of ENACT who serves as Distinguished Legislator for the program.
- Students enroll in the first ENACT courses outside of Massachusetts and engage directly with the process of state-level legislation, as the network expands across the country.

Selected resources

- The national online ENACT Network, connecting students, faculty, legislators and citizens so that they can share tools and strategies for state-level legislative engagement, as well as reflections, ideas and analysis, with other individuals and organizations with shared interests.
- Anthologies of student work from seven years of the Brandeis University ENACT course, available online and in print.

How to connect

- Join our mailing list for news and updates
- Follow us on Twitter: @ENACTBrandeis
- Visit go.brandeis.edu/ENACT

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The International Center for Ethics, Justice and Public Life develops effective responses to conflict and injustice by offering innovative approaches to coexistence, strengthening the work of international courts, and encouraging ethical practice in civic and professional life.

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